

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in permitting me to speak on this resolution and his leadership in bringing it forward. I am going to support the resolution. I, too, am troubled by what we have seen with the Syrian government. I am heartened by some activities in the Middle East. I think there is some real progress. But I would step back for a moment and ask us to reflect on something that has been happening that does not reflect so well on our government.

Just moments ago, the House overwhelmingly approved an amendment advanced by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. *Markey*) and me that dealt with making sure that money that we approved in the supplemental was not used to torture suspects of terrorism. We have this sense, and it is one that the people I represent feel very strongly about, that we have a responsibility and an obligation as the world's oldest democracy to be upholding our standards of rule of law, of due process. We have made torture illegal not just because people are concerned that it is an immoral practice, we do so because it is not a good way to get useful information.

Dictatorships torture indiscriminately, but it is not a way, as the Intelligence Community well understands, that we get good information upon which to base activities that may put our men and women at risk and to protect United States interests. Furthermore, we do not torture suspects of terror because if we do so, then any information that is gathered from that process taints any potential case and we cannot bring people to justice in a court of law.

Last but not least, we do not torture because we want a standard established where we can use our moral authority to make sure that Americans abroad are protected, whether they are in uniform or they are civilians.

There are a variety of moral, practical reasons why we are against torture. Yet I would note that there are too many press accounts for us to ignore, too many reports from nongovernmental organizations that the United States is participating in and condoning torture on behalf of prisoners that we have taken to other countries. There is a famous case that now the Canadian government wants investigated where the United States kidnapped a Canadian citizen and rendered this person to Syria where he was tortured. We have called for this Congress to get on top of what is, I am afraid, an emerging scandal, where we use extraordinary rendition, where we kidnap and transport people, where there is not effective oversight, where Congress does not know what is going on, where there are people who are not being held accountable, where there are problems that we have seen with people who have been in custody of the CIA and some of the American prisons that we have had in Afghanistan and Iraq.

We, as a Congress, need to be doing our job because we do not believe in torture; it is illegal; it is against international conventions; it is against the interests of the United States. And I must re-emphasize the irony when we come forward with a resolution that points out the problems, legitimate problems, the abuses in Syria, and then it appears as though the United States is willing to offer up people to countries like Syria, where we thought they are in fact going to be tortured.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that Congress gets ahead of this issue, that Congress does its job to investigate these widespread reports that are coming through now our own legal system, that are coming through the media, that are coming from nongovernmental organizations, that we exercise our oversight to make sure that we have our own house in order. There should be no prospect that we are on one hand going to be a Congress that condemns torture and abuse of human rights in Syria, and on the other hand we are going to look the other way when we may be offering up people who are suspects, not convicted of anything, to be turned over to the hands of these same torturers.

I would sincerely hope that we will have activity on the part of all of us to make sure the many committees in Congress do their job to provide this oversight and that we are not relying on the media, nongovernmental organizations, and what trickles through the legal system to do a job that we should be doing.